



Department of Commerce Occupational Safety and Health Report

JANUARY 2004

Occupational Safety and Health Report

January 2004

Introduction

This report provides an update to Department of Commerce (DOC) managers and employees on the progress of Departmental safety and occupational health initiatives and information regarding important Department-wide safety and occupational health issues for December 2003. The report also contains the latest available accident data for the Department. Section One of the report, Program Updates, provides updates on the safety and occupational health initiatives. Section Two, Injury Statistics, provides statistics regarding Department injuries, as reported to the Workers' Compensation Program for December 2003, and an analysis of the data to assist bureaus in focusing their safety efforts. Section Three, Survey Results, provides the January results from the on-line survey available through the intranet Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) Program Web Site.

Section One: Program Updates

Leveraging Resources

In an effort to reduce workers' compensation costs, lost work days, and to get people back to work, the Office of Occupational Safety and Health (OOSH) is working with the DOC Office of Acquisition Management (OAM) to ensure claimant physician referrals are reviewed by the Herbert C. Hoover Health Unit physician to reconcile new Department of Labor (DOL), Office of Workers' Compensation Program (OWCP) claims. OOSH is also working with OAM's contracting staff and OHRM budget analysts to transfer long-term workers' compensation cases to the existing Contract Claims Services Inc. contract to ensure full time focus on long-term workers' compensation cases.

To improve timeliness of workers' compensation reporting of injuries and illnesses to the DOL OWCP, the Department is working with DOL to explore the use of its Safety and Health Information Management System, which could expedite workers' compensation claims, reduce reporting requirements, and standardize incident reporting throughout the Department.

OSH Standardization

To address our OSH standardization initiative, OOSH staff met with the Department of Army to review their corporate OSH oversight assessment tool, Web-based Compliance Assistance System (WebCASS). WebCASS, if feasible, could provide comprehensive, consistent and standardized self-assessment and oversight assessment for DOC safety and health staff. The WebCASS assessment tool would aide DOC safety and health personnel by creating objective

measures that can be used for program improvement/development, funding and illness and injury prevention.

Training and Awareness

In support of our emergency preparedness support initiative, OOSH represented the DOC at the Emergency Preparedness for People with Disabilities conference at the DOL. This interagency seminar facilitated the exchange of agency programs to support people with disabilities in the event of an emergency or disaster. OOSH staff shared DOC training, awareness, and employee support programs to include: the evacuation chair program and the Automated External Defibrillator (AED) Program.

Section Two: Injury Statistics and Analysis

This section provides information on the total number of Departmental injuries for the past five years and analyzes the types of injuries across the Department. The information in Chart 2 reflects statistics through December 2003. Due to late submissions, processing limitations and to ensure the accuracy of the information, this section will continue to include information up to the previous month. The data presented in the charts and tables are based upon Departmental Workers' Compensation Program records.

Incidence Rate: The incidence rate (IR) represents the number of injuries and illnesses per 100 full-time workers and is calculated as follows:

$$IR = \frac{N}{EH}(200,000)$$

N	=	Number of injuries and illnesses
EH	=	Total hours worked by all employees during the year ¹
200,000	=	Base for 100 equivalent full-time workers (40 hours per week, 50 weeks per year)

¹ The total hours worked were determined based on the total number of employees and the average hours.

The Commerce Workers' Compensation Program keeps records on all injury and illness claims, including those that did not include any lost work time. An accounting of all incidents allows follow-up and more comprehensive program review by safety representatives. However, the incident rates from those records are not directly comparable, since they include many minor injuries and illnesses that are not considered "work-related" under Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) standards for private industry. Injury rates may be skewed as safety awareness increases and employees are encouraged to report all injuries, causing total

injury rates to increase despite improvements to safety. Using standardized OSHA recordable incident reporting helps to reduce inconsistent reporting. An OSHA recordable incident is a work-related injury or illness that resulted in one or more of the following: medical treatment beyond first aid, a significant injury or illness diagnosed by a physician or other licensed health care professional, days away from work, restricted work or transfer to another job, loss of consciousness, or death.

Table 1A provides data that corresponds to the OSHA recordable injury criteria. The remaining tables and charts include data for all cases submitted to the Workers' Compensation Program.

Chart 1

Historical Total Case Incidence Rate Trend (TCIR)

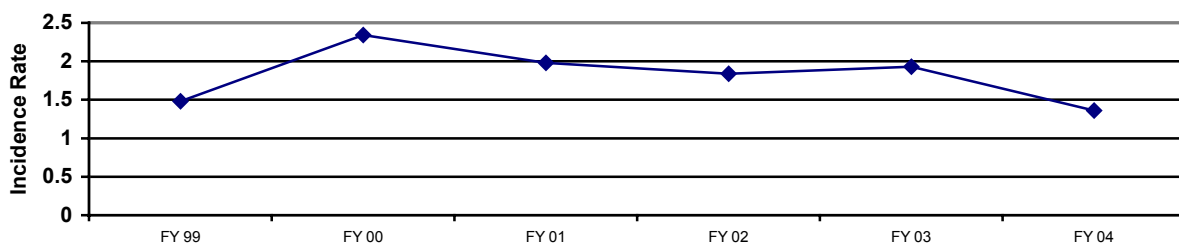
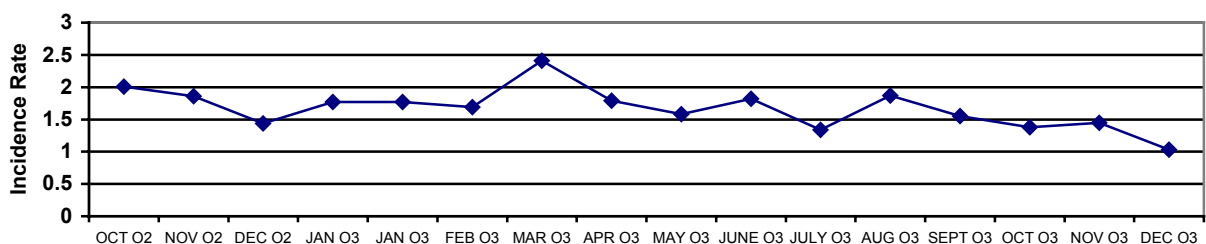


Chart 2

Monthly for Case Incidence Rate Trend (TCIR)



Major Findings include:

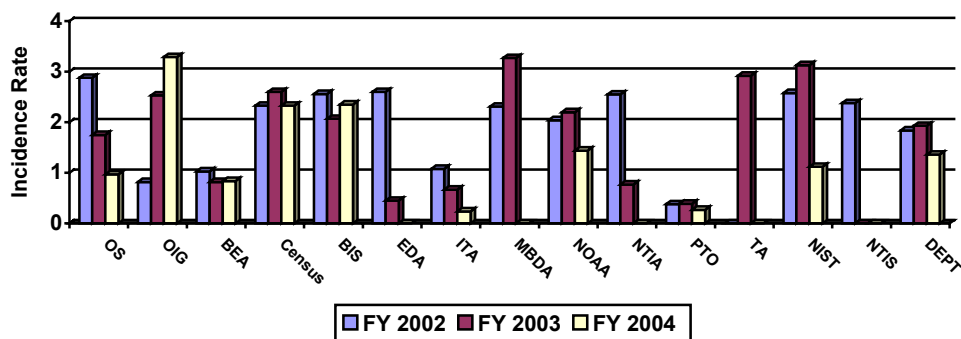
- The FY 2004 Total Case Incidence Rate (TCIR) to date for Commerce is down from the rate for FY 2003 and FY 2002. The TCIR is 1.36 (see Chart 1) for FY 2004, 1.93 for FY

2003, and 1.84 for FY 2002. A total of 115 total injuries were reported thus far for FY 2004 (see Table 1).

- All of the larger bureaus (with more than 500 employees) to include the Bureau of Census and The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) had lower TCIRs to date for FY 2004 when compared to FY 2003.
- Of the smaller bureaus (i.e., bureaus with less than 500 employees), only four injuries were reported to date in FY 2004.
- The Total Recordable Case Incidence Rate (TRCIR) for Commerce is down from previous years. The TRCIRs for Commerce are 1.01 for FY 2004, 1.48 for FY 2003 and 1.60 for FY 2002 (see Table 1A).

Chart 3

Total Case Incidence Rate Comparison (TCIR)



Types of Injuries: Many of the injuries reported can be prevented through improved safety awareness and proper maintenance. A Departmental and bureau focus on eliminating injuries and illnesses continues to be essential. Evaluating the types of claims submitted and structuring safety awareness training programs to eliminate accidents can assist in the mitigation of injuries and illnesses. Information on types of injuries is provided in Charts 4 and 5 and Tables 2 and 2A.

- **“Struck By” injuries accounted for 22 percent of those reported in FY 2003 (see Chart 4) and 31 percent in December 2003.** Most of the struck by injuries were caused

by objects in the workplace, cabinet doors and file cabinets not closed. These injuries are preventable and require the assistance of the entire DOC staff to be mindful of our fellow staff members by doing simple preventive tasks such as closing cabinets, etc., when not in use.

- **“Exertion” injuries accounted for 25 percent of all injuries in the Department for FY 2003 and for 10 percent in December 2003.** Lifting and moving heavy objects still account for most of the exertion injuries. Again, we request that employees use a cart to move heavy objects and/or ask for assistance.

“Slips/Falls” injuries accounted for 31 percent of all injuries in FY 2003 (see Chart 4). The numbers have increased from last month, November 2003, and account for 45% of injuries reported in December 2003 (see Chart 5). Most slips and falls were due to walking surfaces. Weather was the primary cause of injuries due to ice on the sidewalks and parking lots and melted ice in the entrances and hallways. Employees should use caution and be attentive to the condition of walking surfaces.

Chart 4
Injury Type As Percentage of Total Injuries for FY 2003

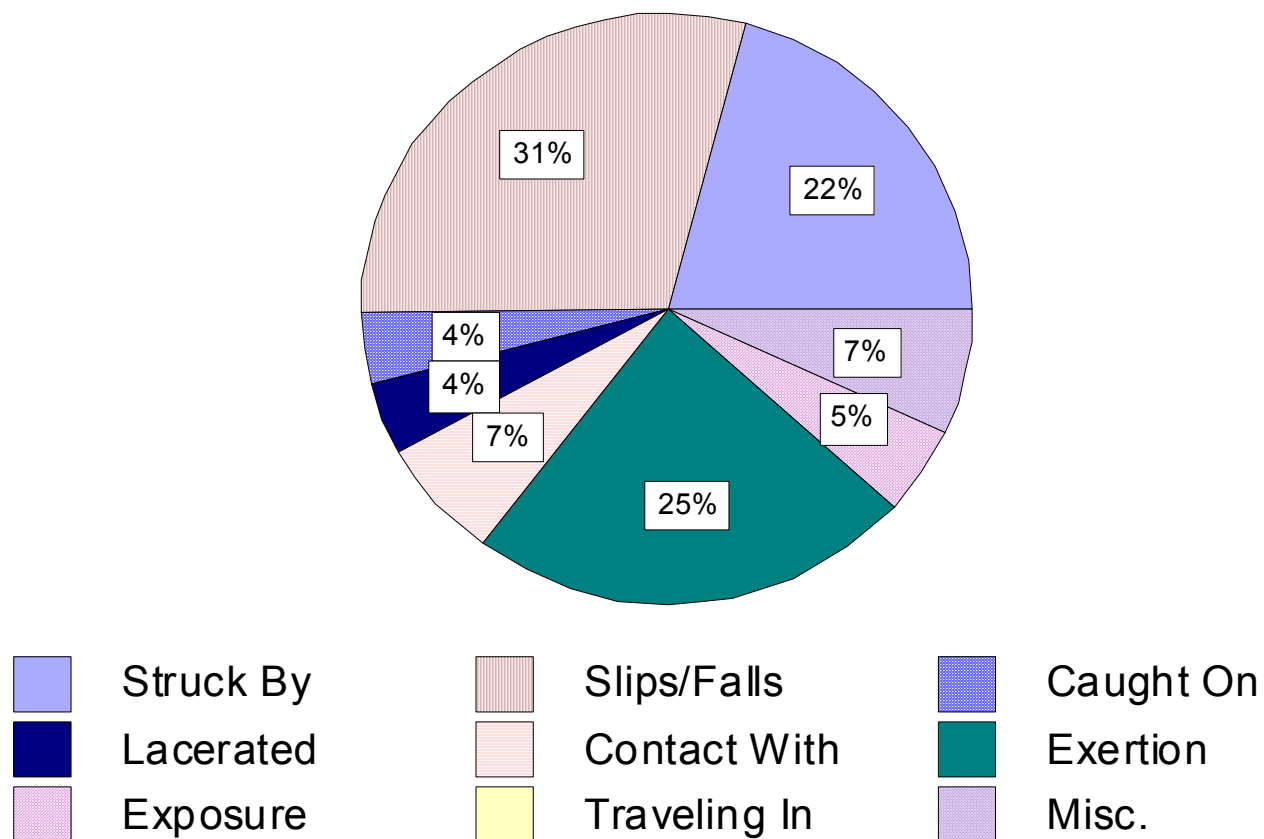


Chart 5
Injury Type As Percentage of Total Injuries

DECEMBER 03

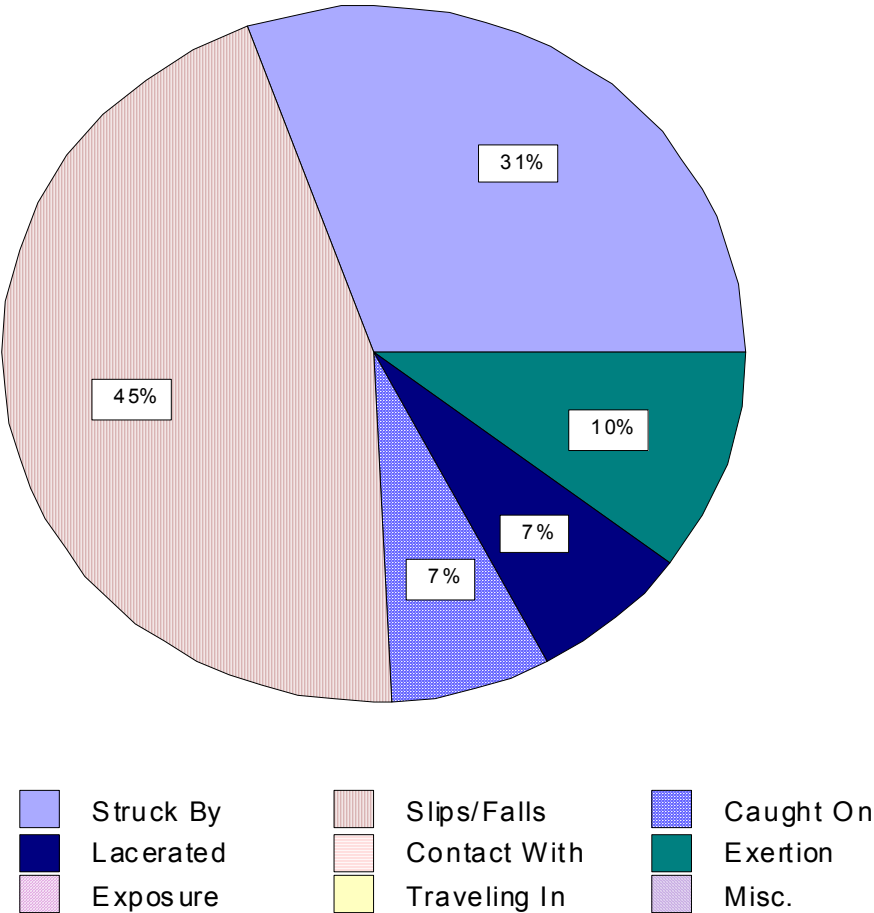


TABLE 1
TOTAL CASE INCIDENCE RATE* (TCIR)

Bureau	FY1999		FY2000		FY2001		FY2002		FY2003		November 2003		December 2003		FY 2004 (To Date)	
	No.	Rate	No.	Rate	No.	Rate	No.	Rate	No.	Rate	No.	Rate	No.	Rate	No.	Rate
Office of the Secretary	19	2.20*	35	3.94	22	2.47	23	2.88	14	1.75	1	1.47	0	0	2	.97
Office of Inspector General	2	1.32	4	2.98	3	2.15	1	0.82	3	2.53	1	9.88	0	0	1	3.29
Bureau of Economic Analysis	4	0.88	1	0.23	5	1.12	4	1.03	4	0.82	0	0	0	0	1	.84
Bureau of the Census	311	1.04	383	2.83	393	2.41	241	2.33	252	2.60	23	2.86	15	1.87	56	2.33
Bureau of Industry and Security	11	3.08	15	4.06	9	2.44	9	2.56	7	2.07	1	3.52	0	0	2	2.35
Economic Development Administration	9	3.67	4	1.69	5	2.08	6	2.60	1	0.45	0	0	0	0	0	0
International Trade Administration	18	0.92	24	1.23	12	0.62	18	1.08	11	0.67	0	0	1	.73	1	.24
Minority Business Development Agency	1	1.10	3	3.40	4	4.36	2	2.31	3	3.27	0	0	0	0	0	0
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration	317	2.78	307	2.69	247	2.18	228	2.04	246	2.20	14	1.50	9	.97	40	1.44
National Telecommunications & Information Administration	2	0.88	2	0.87	7	3.03	6	2.55	2	0.77	0	0	0	0	0	0
Patent and Trademark Office	27	0.47	29	0.50	31	0.55	24	0.38	24	0.39	0	0	2	.40	4	.27
Technology Administration	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2.92	0	0	0	0	0	0
National Institute of Standards and Technology	84	2.87	79	2.82	68	2.34	76	2.58	90	3.13	1	0.42	2	.84	8	1.12
National Technical Information Service	6	2.61	4	2.15	1	0.52	4	2.38	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	811	1.48	890	2.34	807	1.98	642	1.84	658	1.93	41	1.45	29	1.03	115	1.36
Decennial Census 2000	890	11.3	4798	6.7	32	13.3										

* Total Case Incidence Rate includes all cases reported to the Workers' Compensation Program.

** Population fluctuations can have a serious positive or negative impact on the Total Case Incidence Rate.

TABLE 1A
TOTAL RECORDABLE CASE INCIDENCE RATE* (TRCIR)

Bureau	FY1999		FY 2000		FY2001		FY 2002		FY2003		November 2003		December 2003		FY 2004 (To Date)	
	No.	Rate	No.	Rate	No.	Rate	No.	Rate	No.	Rate	No.	Rate	No.	Rate	No.	Rate
Office of the Secretary	19	2.20*	30	3.38	17	1.91	22	2.75	12	1.50	1	1.47	0	0	2	.97
Office of Inspector General	1	0.66	3	2.24	3	2.15	1	0.82	3	2.53	1	9.88	0	0	1	3.29
Bureau of Economic Analysis	4	0.88	0	0	5	1.12	3	0.77	3	0.62	0	0	0	0	1	.84
Bureau of the Census	288	0.96	345	2.55	332	2.04	212	2.05	184	1.90	16	1.99	9	1.12	40	1.66
Bureau of Industry and Security	10	2.80	13	3.52	8	2.17	9	2.56	7	2.07	0	0	0	0	1	1.17
Economic Development Administration	8	3.26	4	1.69	5	2.08	6	2.60	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
International Trade Administration	17	0.86	22	1.13	11	0.57	10	0.60	11	0.67	0	0	0	0	0	0
Minority Business Development Agency	1	1.10	2	2.27	4	4.36	2	2.31	2	2.18	0	0	0	0	0	0
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration	275	2.41	289	2.53	225	1.98	203	1.81	196	1.75	13	1.39	7	.76	35	1.26
National Telecommunications & Information Administration	2	0.88	2	0.87	5	2.16	3	1.27	2	0.77	0	0	0	0	0	0
Patent and Trademark Office	26	0.45	29	0.50	31	0.55	24	0.38	24	0.39	0	0	2	.40	2	.13
Technology Administration	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2.92	0	0	0	0	0	0
National Institute of Standards and Technology	76	2.60	66	2.36	55	1.89	59	2.00	58	2.01	0	0	2	.84	3	.42
National Technical Information Service	5	2.18	4	2.15	1	0.52	3	1.78	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	732	1.34	809	2.13	702	1.72	557	1.60	503	1.48	31	1.10	20	.71	85	1.01
Decennial Census 2000	890	11.3	4798	6.7	32	13.3										

* The Total Recordable Case Incidence Rate includes only those injuries or illnesses that are reportable to OSHA under 29 Code of Federal Regulations, Part 1904.

** Population fluctuations can have a serious positive or negative impact on the Total Reported Case Incidence Rate.

Table 2

**INJURY TYPES BY BUREAU
AGENCIES WITH MORE THAN 500 EMPLOYEES
(Through December 2003)**

BUREAU	NOAA			CENSUS			NIST			PTO			ITA			OS			TOTAL
Fiscal Year	02	03	04	02	03	04	02	03	04	02	03	04	02	03	04	02	03	04	
Struck By/Against An Object	29	55	15	27	45	16	8	26	3	4	5	3	1	3	0	2	3	0	245
Falls/Slips	59	59	6	96	96	20	22	21	3	7	12	0	7	6	0	2	2	1	419
Caught On An Object	5	12	2	8	3	0	2	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	42
Cuts/Bites	26	5	0	19	19	3	9	1	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	87
Contact With An Object	19	5	0	11	5	1	6	0	0	6	4	1	2	0	0	1	0	0	61
Exertion/ Motion	64	73	12	37	51	15	17	22	0	2	2	0	2	0	0	1	8	1	307
Exposure To Chemicals/ Elements	9	9	0	6	18	0	3	3	0	1	0	0	6	1	0	12	0	0	68
Traveling In Car/Metro/ Taxi	10	0	0	16	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	27
Miscellaneous*	7	22	5	21	10	1	8	8	2	2	0	0	0	1	0	2	0	0	89
TOTAL	228	240	40	241	247	56	76	88	8	24	24	4	18	11	1	23	14	2	1345

* Miscellaneous includes injuries not covered in the standard OSHA types of injuries. These include twisting/bending injuries, emotional/psychological stress injuries, injuries which exacerbate a preexisting condition resulting in conditions such as heart attack, seizures, and stroke.

** Decennial Census claims were omitted to provide a clearer picture of injury trends

Table 2A

**INJURY TYPES BY BUREAU
AGENCIES WITH LESS THAN 500 EMPLOYEES
(Through December 2003)**

BUREAU	OIG			ESA/BEA			EDA			TA			NTIS			NTIA			MBDA			BIS			Total	
Fiscal Year	02	03	04	02	03	04	02	03	04	02	03	04	02	03	04	02	03	04	02	03	04	02	03	04		
Struck By/Against An Object	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	2	2	0	9	
Falls/Slips	0	1	0	2	1	1	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	1	2	0	0	2	0	18	
Caught On An Object	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	2	
Cuts/Bites	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Contact with an Object	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	3	0	0	5	
Exertion/ Motion	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	3	2	14
Exposure To Chemicals/ Elements	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	
Traveling In Car/Metro/ Taxi	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	
Miscellaneous*	0	1	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	7	
Total	1	3	1	4	4	1	6	1	0	0	1	0	4	0	0	6	2	0	2	3	0	9	7	2	57	

* Miscellaneous includes injuries not covered in the standard OSHA types of injuries. These include twisting/bending injuries, emotional/psychological stress injuries, injuries which exacerbate a preexisting condition resulting in conditions such as heart attack, seizures, and stroke.

Section Three: Survey Results

We continue to receive comments through the Safety Survey website. We are using employee comments to help shape a safety program responsive to employee issues and concerns. The website can be accessed through the OHRM homepage at <http://ohrm.doc.gov/>.

Safety Survey Statistics

We received 133 responses to January's survey. The following tables provide some data regarding the distribution of responses by bureau and general geographical area, as well as general safety impressions. The occupational safety and health survey provides feedback from the DOC community we serve and provides an additional insight on whether or not Departmental occupational safety and health programs and initiatives are active.

Table 3a
Safety Survey
December Results

Have you experienced a safety lapse in your work area during the past 3 months?		
Answer	Count	Percent
No	144	86.36%
Yes	18	13.64%

Table 3b
Safety Survey
November Results

Have you noticed any safety improvements in your work area or in the Department as a whole during the past 3 months?		
Answer	Count	Percent
No	80	61.07%
Yes	51	38.93%

Table 3b indicates the continued perception that there is a lack of safety improvements within the Department. Over 86.46% of these concerns are associated with the Department's four major bureaus NOAA, CENSUS, PTO and NIST respectively (see Table 3d).

This issue will be addressed at the Safety and Health Survey Working Group meeting scheduled for February 11, 2004, with major bureaus and participating agencies. This working

group has been charged to: evaluate and modify the current survey; develop an efficient method to track employee concerns, and create an effective feedback strategy.

Table 3c
Safety Survey
November Results by Geographic Area

Geographical Location		
State	Count	Percent
AK	2	1.52%
CA	2	1.52%
CO	5	3.79%
DC	20	15.15%
FL	4	3.03%
GA	1	0.76%
HI	3	2.27%
IA	1	0.76%
ID	2	1.52%
IN	3	2.27%
KS	3	2.27%
KY	1	0.76%
MA	1	0.76%
MD	46	34.85%
MI	2	1.52%
MO	3	2.27%
NC	1	0.76%
NE	1	0.76%
NJ	1	0.76%
NV	1	0.76%

NY	1	0.76%
OK	1	0.76%
OR	3	2.27%
PA	1	0.76%
RI	1	0.76%
TX	2	1.52%
UT	1	0.57%
VA	17	12.88%
WA	2	1.52%
WI	1	0.76%

Table 3d
Safety Survey
November Results by Bureau/Agency

Bureau Breakdown		
Answer	Count	Percent
BEA	3	2.26%
BXA	1	0.75%
CENSUS	26	19.55%
EDA	2	1.50%
ITA	5	3.76%
NIST	11	8.27%
NOAA	61	45.86%
NTIA	1	0.75%
NTIS	3	2.26%
OS	3	2.26%
PTO	3	2.26%